

PRELIMINARY VISION OF MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND ISSUES FOR THE PROPOSED FIDALGO BAY AQUATIC RESERVE

Overarching Goal for the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserves

Protect and restore Fidalgo Bay's natural biological communities, habitats, ecosystems and processes, and the ecological services, uses and values they provide to current and future generations.

Ecological Resources

The Fidalgo Bay site contains expansive native eelgrass beds and tide flats that support spawning and rearing for forage fish, including Pacific herring, surf smelt, and sand lance. Migratory waterfowl, blue heron, and raptors such as bald eagles and peregrine falcon also utilize the site for foraging. Puget Sound salmon utilize the proposed reserve area for feeding, refuge, and migration. The site also contains oyster and clams, and is used as Dungeness crab rearing habitat. The site is intended to support the conservation easement established by the Skagit Land Trust for south Fidalgo Bay.

Outline of Anticipated Management Issues

1. Limit leasing activity to leases for conservation, restoration or mitigation activities on state-owned aquatic lands within the Aquatic Reserve. This would preclude the development of permanent structures.
2. Identify ecological concerns, proposed management strategies, and areas for active restoration:
 - Sediment characterization and clean-up
 - Comprehensive evaluation of stormwater impacts
 - Assess nutrient impacts from Hwy. 20 and drainage from the golf course
 - Assess potential impacts from adjacent March Point refinery drainages.
 - Options for improving circulation in the area south of the trestle.
 - Physical habitat restoration.
 - Removing creosote from trestle
 - Riparian area management and restoration
3. Identify cultural resources
4. Describe important aquatic resources and management objectives related to these resources
5. Define research and monitoring
6. Management strategies, roles, and partnerships.
7. Remove legal designations that are not appropriate for Aquatic Reserves. Remove the area of the proposed Aquatic Reserve from harbor area designation and state waterway designation.

Proposed Schedule

April – July 2006

1. Meet with interest groups to identify issues
2. Develop draft of Fidalgo Bay Plan
3. Continue to consult with constituents as necessary

August 2006

Public meeting to discuss FB management plan

August – November 2006

Develop final FB draft mgmt. plan

Internal review of FB draft mgmt. plan

Revise FB draft mgmt. plan based on internal review

December 2006

1. Issue FB draft mgmt. Plan for public review - Comment period –December 15, 2006
February 1, 2007
2. Complete SEPA checklist and determine SEPA action
3. January 15 public meeting

January – February 2007

1. Revise FB mgmt. plan and SEPA document (if necessary)
2. Respond to comments
3. Internal review of final draft FB management plan
4. Draft Commissioner's Order

March 2007

Commissioner's Order signed for FB

Issue Notice of Final Action

April 2007

DNR adopt Fidalgo Bay plan